

Mar 13, 2018

Education Committee  
CT

Dear Members of the Education Committee, Committee,

As an advocate with Food Allergy Research & Education, I am writing to you to voice my support of HB 5452. The bill addresses important concerns regarding the safety of students, including allowing school transportation personnel to intervene in an allergic emergency, having the state update current school food allergy guidelines, and putting policies in place to keep food allergic students safely participating in culinary programs.

My wife and I have 3 children (age 6, 4, and 2). Our two youngest kids have severe food allergies. My daughter, Lucy (4yr), is allergic to tree nuts and sesame and my son, Benjamin (2), is allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, pineapple, kiwi, banana. As you can imagine we have daily challenges managing their food allergies and we are constantly living in fear that they're going to be exposed and have an anaphylactic reaction. We always have multiple EpiPens on us wherever we are and make every effort to create a safe environment for them while still allowing them to be kids and have fun with friends/family. As our daughter is getting closer to school age she's already expressed things that she's looking forward to such as riding the bus, buying hot lunch, after school programs, etc which she sees her older brother doing. My wife and I have had countless conversations about our fears of her riding the bus and having hot lunch at school because of the potential exposure to allergens and the inadequate ability to manage a potential allergic reaction immediately.

With her not allowed to carry an EpiPen on the bus and the bus driver not being trained in how to administer the EpiPen this is an unnecessary risk in my opinion. I'm a physician myself, and in medicine we call this a "never event." An anaphylactic reaction needs to be managed immediately and there cannot be any delay in administering the EpiPen because the child could die. There was just recently a report of a 12yr old girl that had an anaphylactic reaction on a bus and the bus driver brought her immediately to the high school where the nurse administered the EpiPen and called for an ambulance. Unfortunately the girl died, and one of the main concerns was the 15 minutes it took to get her to the high school to get the EpiPen. Obviously the school and bus company have rules around not eating on the bus, but we all know this is not always the case and hard to oversee. The EpiPen for an allergy family is like an extra appendage or an extra kid in my mind. I never leave home without it, I never drive in the car without having it right by my side when I'm with my daughter or my son and we've started educating our 4yr old that she always needs to have it on her. At the school, the current policy is that the EpiPen stays in the nurses office. It's not in the lunch room with the kids that have allergies....obviously it's close by, but it's scary to think that it's not closer to her just in case there was a need to use it. The allergens we deal with are challenging for so many reasons and so many foods contain these ingredients. I hope that you can understand the gravity of the situation and that these decisions are life or death matters. Pass HB5452 and make this a "never event" for allergy families!!!

Thank you,  
Danny & Jill Zanchetti

For these reasons, I ask you to bring HB 5452 to a vote and vote YES.  
Thank you.

Sincerely,

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